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ABSTRACT

This paper examines racial and ethnic achievement disparities in places where schools are reputedly excellent, reporting on the 2000-2001 Ed-Excel Assessment of Secondary School Culture, which collected data on black, white, Hispanic, Asian, and mixed race students. Questions covered family characteristics, opinions about instructional quality, enjoyment of studies, achievement motivations, course taking patterns, effort, comprehension, grade point averages, and more. Overall, African American and Hispanic students in Minority Student Achievement Network districts had fewer family background advantages on average, had lower grade point averages, and reported less understanding of their lessons than Whites and Asians. They also had lower homework completion rates than Whites but spent virtually the same amount of time doing homework. Skill gaps and differences in home academic supports, not effort or motivation, appeared to be the primary explanations for their completing less homework and getting lower grades than Whites. Conversely, part of the reason that Asians completed more homework and got higher grades than other nonwhite groups was that they devoted more time to their studies. Teacher encouragement was very important in motivating nonwhite students, especially African Americans. This was truly a racial difference, mostly unrelated to socioeconomic status. (Contains 14 tables and 23 references.) (SM)

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What Doesn't Meet the Eye:

Understanding and Addressing Racial Disparities in High-Achieving Suburban Schools

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Introduction

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Among other important features, it dictates that states should publish achievement results separately for racial and ethnic groups and work to alleviate inter-group disparities. Thus, for the first time in the nation's history, raising achievement levels among racial and ethnic minorities and closing achievement gaps are explicit goals of federal policy.[1]

Improving the quality of inner cities schools will be an important aspect of pursuing these goals, but it will not be sufficient.[2] Suburbs must respond as well. The U.S. Census for the year 2000 reports that 33 percent of the nation's African American children, 45 percent of Hispanic children, 54 percent of Asian children and 55 percent of white children live in suburban communities.[3] Some attend poor, segregated schools, similar to the poorest in the inner city, while others attend racially integrated schools in well-off communities where resources are relatively abundant and schools are reputedly excellent.

This paper concerns racial and ethnic achievement disparities in places where schools are reputedly excellent.[4] Until recently, large achievement gaps in these districts were seldom discussed in public. (While all racial groups were represented in all parts of the achievement distribution, blacks and Hispanics were underrepresented at the top and over-represented at the

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[1] For a discussion of racial achievement disparities and trends in disparity see Ferguson, 2001. Also see various publications of the National Center for Education Statistics, at http://nces.ed.gov/. For other recent collections and overviews concerning racial achievement disparities and potential actions to reduce them, see Jencks and Phillips, 1998, the College Board, 1999, and Walker-James, Jurich and Estes, 2001.

[2] For a recent report on cities that are making progress see Snipes, Doolittle and Herlihy, 2002.

[3] Source: Calculated by the author from data available at http://factfinder.census.gov, Census 2000 Summary File 1: Detailed Tables, tables P12A, B, D and H. The numbers pertain to children ages 19 and under and exclude children for whom more than one race/ethnic category was indicated.

[4] Since at least the time of Brown v. Board of Education, the belief among many has been that nonwhite children would excel in school if only they could have access to the same high quality classrooms that white children attended. Indeed, Kain and Persky, 1969, and others over the years, have sometimes argued against "ghetto development" because, they assumed, educational and other opportunities for blacks and others were greater in the suburbs. Definitive evidence on whether black children do in fact do better in the suburbs has been slow to accumulate because of data and methodological problems. See my discussion of this in Ferguson, 2002, and references included there. An interesting recent paper on the effects of racial integration is Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin, 2001. They find that increasing the percentage black in a school has the most adverse effects on high achieving blacks.

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bottom.) Schools took pride, as they still do, in the numbers of graduates scoring high on college entrance exams and matriculating to prestigious universities. Public officials, parents and teachers alike considered the latter achievements to be proof positive that the quality of education was high. Not surprisingly, the idea that schools and teachers should be searching relentlessly for ways to raise achievement, with special attention to African American, Hispanic and low-income students, was seldom a focus.

Fortunately, this pattern of apparent neglect and denial is beginning to change. In 1999, fifteen middle- and upper-middle-income districts in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, California and Virginia, formed the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN). Together, they acknowledged the racial and ethnic achievement disparities in their primary and secondary schools. They resolved jointly to seek ways of narrowing gaps between European and Asian Americans, on the one hand, versus Hispanic and African Americans, on the other.

Among their first joint initiatives, was an effort to understand better what students of different racial and ethnic groups were experiencing in school that might affect their engagement and achievement. During the 2000-2001 school year, ninety-five schools across all fifteen districts surveyed middle and high school students using the "Ed-Excel Assessment of Secondary School Student Culture."[5] The present paper reports some of what we have learned from the responses of 7th to 11th graders and discusses some implications.[6] For these grades, the sample includes 7120 blacks, 17,562 whites, 2491 Hispanics, 2448 Asians and 4507 mixed-race

[5] Professor John Bishop of Cornell University developed the survey instrument.
[6] A few schools surveyed 6th and 12th graders, but since only a small minority of the districts did so, 6th and 12th graders are not discussed in the present paper. In most instances, schools administered the questionnaire to all students in each surveyed grade who were present when the survey was given. Some districts surveyed only selected grades, such as 7th, 9th and 11th.

students.[7] The analysis and associated tables in the paper pertain to this full sample of 7th to 11th graders.[8]

Questions in the Ed-Excel survey cover family characteristics, opinions about the quality of instruction, enjoyment of studies, achievement motivations, course-taking patterns, effort, comprehension, grade point averages and more. It is well known that survey data can have self-reporting biases. Further, it is virtually impossible with data collected at one point in time and with only one observation per student, to distinguish causal relationships among variables from mere correlations. Nonetheless, the data indicate strongly that there are common forces at work across the various states and localities represented. The high degree of similarity among districts underscores the strength and consistency of historically rooted social and economic forces that today produce such similar patterns in so many different places. Due to space limitations, the tables and discussion in this paper address aggregates, pooled for all fifteen districts. However, district-by-district tabulations that show the similarity among districts are available at the MSAN website.[9]

The paper begins with a brief preview of key patterns. Then, the main body of the paper presents the survey findings in greater detail. Sections near the end of the paper discuss implications for schools, communities and policymakers. There, I emphasize the importance of professional development programs that have a combined emphasis on content, pedagogy *and relationships*. Findings below concerning encouragement focus attention on the possibility that effective teacher-student relationships may be especially important resources for motivating black and Hispanic students. I argue that when teachers have strong content knowledge and are willing to adapt their pedagogies to meet student needs, adding good teacher-student relationships and

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[7] "Mixed-race" means that the student listed more than one race or ethnicity. There were many mixtures, about 40 percent of which were whites mixed with one other group. Only 17 percent were black mixed with white. Some students indicated more than two groups. Hispanics and Asians reported more mixing with other groups than blacks or whites did.

[8] Observations with missing data for any given variable are not included in tabulations of that variable. Generally, the number of missing observations for any given variable is small.

strong encouragement to the mix may be key. It may help black and Hispanic students seek help more readily, engage their studies deeply and ultimately overcome skill gaps that are due in substantial measure to past and present disparities in family-background advantages and associated social inequities.

A preview of key patterns

Racial and ethnic differences addressed in this paper fall primarily into four categories. First, there are self-reported achievement and skill disparities. Compared to whites and Asians, black, Hispanic and mixed-race students indicate lower grade point averages (which is consistent with official records). Blacks and Hispanics also report less understanding of their teachers' lessons and less comprehension of the material that they read for school. Problems understanding lessons and comprehending readings reflect knowledge and skill deficiencies that responsive instructional strategies can help to ameliorate.

Second, are socioeconomic status and home learning resources. White and Asian students in these communities arrive at school with greater socioeconomic background advantages, on average, compared to blacks and Hispanics. These include home learning resources, such as books and computers in the home. Several measures of socioeconomic status are important predictors of achievement (though the estimates indicate that particular SES advantages boost achievement less among blacks and Hispanics than among whites and Asians).

Third, students were asked, "When you work really hard in school, which of the following reasons are most important for you?" In response, nonwhite students, and especially blacks, identified teacher encouragement more frequently than did whites. Further, nonwhites indicated teacher encouragement *substantially* more often than they emphasized teachers' demands. Conversely, white students cited teachers' demands more often than nonwhites and about equally as often as they (whites) cited teacher encouragement. These racial and ethnic differences are not explained by measures of socioeconomic status. The emphasis among

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[9] The web address is http://www.msanetwork.org/

nonwhites on teacher encouragement, as distinct from teacher demands, suggests the special importance of teacher-student relationships as a source of achievement motivation for blacks and Hispanics, in particular.

Fourth, there are racial and ethnic differences in behaviors and homework completion rates. The differences make whites and Asians appear to be more academically engaged and may give teachers the impression that whites and Asians are more interested in their studies and work harder, on average, than black or Hispanic classmates.

However, there is much that does not meet the teacher's eye, including a number of inter-group similarities. Measures of effort and interest are the prime examples. As stated above, there are differences in reported rates of homework completion. However, reported times spent studying and doing homework differ very little among blacks, whites and Hispanics in the same school and grade who take the same level classes.[10] Asians are the only group that stands out with regard to effort, as measured by time on homework. Further, no group, not even Asians, expressed a distinctively high level of interest in schoolwork.

Achievement gaps in MSAN districts

There are three achievement indicators in the MSAN Ed-Excel data and all show racial gaps.[11] First, the survey asks, "What was your grade point average last term?" The respondent chooses one option from among A, A-, B+ and so on, down to D+, D, and D-/F. While self-reports can sometimes be misleading, comparisons of survey findings with official records for race-by-gender groups indicate only moderate inflation in the self-reports, and the same basic

[10] By class "level," I mean to distinguish whether students are taking honors or AP courses from whether they are not taking any. Whites and Asians enroll in honors and AP classes more often than blacks and Hispanics. Honors and AP classes typically require more homework and students who take such courses spend more time on homework than students who do not, no matter what their race/ethnic group. Racial differences in rates of enrollment in honors and AP courses are not perfectly understood, but seem due mostly to differences in academic proficiency. Most schools are working to increase black and Hispanic enrollments in honors and AP courses. However, there are also efforts underway to improve the quality of regular courses, so as to stem the flight of primarily white students away from them and to provide a higher quality education to students who take them.

[11] Because student surveys did not include official identification numbers, we are not able to merge the data with standardized test scores or data from official transcripts.

rank ordering of GPA among groups.[12] A second indicator of achievement is the student's response to the following question: "What percentage of the time do you completely understand the teacher's lesson?" The forced-choice question offers five possible responses, ranging from "10% or less," to "90% or more." The third achievement variable is the student's answer to "How much of the material that you read for school do you understand very well?"[13] The response options were "very little or none," "some," "about half," "a lot" and "all or nearly all of it."

Table 1 shows the answers for all three questions and each of five race/ethnic groups. In panel A of table 1, fully half of whites and Asians report grade point averages of A or A-, while the same is true for only 15 and 21 percent of blacks and Hispanics respectively. Conversely, 44 percent of blacks and 34 percent of Hispanics report grade point averages of C+ or below while only 14 percent of whites and 15 percent of Asians do. In panel B, slightly more than 50 percent of blacks and Hispanics respond "about half, or less" concerning how much (or how little) of school-related readings they "understand very well."[14] The percentage for whites is 29. For Asians and mixed students, the percentages are 42 and 43, respectively. Panel C shows data for the percentage of the time that students "completely understand" the teacher's lesson. The distribution of answers is similar to panel B. Almost half of black and Hispanic students indicate that they understand the lesson about half the time, or less. The same is true for between one-quarter and one-third of whites and Asians.

-- table 1 about here --

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[12] The survey asked about specific letter grades, and made no mention of whether grades for honors and AP courses might receive differential weighting in computing grade point averages. We have no way of knowing whether honors and AP students might have inflated the letter grades they reported to account for differential weighting.

[13] This was an extra question only for MSAN schools and was not on the printed Ed-Excel survey. Responses were entered in an extra response space at the end of the survey form.

Family background disparities

Are the disparities in Table 1 associated with racial and ethnic differences in the socioeconomic status (SES) of students' families? How large are the SES differences? Table 2 shows that about half of all black students in the sample report that they live with one or neither parent, while only 15 percent of whites report the same. Other groups are between blacks and whites on this measure. The consistency across districts on this measure (and others) is remarkable, given that the districts are in nine different states. Separately for each of the fifteen districts, the percentages of blacks living with one or neither parent are 46, 50, 54, 57, 52, 52, 46, 49, 59, 49, 48, 50, 51, 54 and 53. At the other extreme, the percentages for whites are 14, 14, 15, 15, 22, 14, 16, 11, 14, 12, 10, 12, 19, 18 and 16, respectively.

There are also differences in parental education levels, as shown by the tabulation of "mother's years of schooling" in Table 2.[15] Half of Hispanic students report that their mothers have 12 or fewer years of schooling, while 77 percent of whites report that their mothers have either a 4-year college degree (41 percent) or a graduate degree (36 percent). Black mothers have more years of schooling than Hispanics, but less than Asians, while Asians have less than whites. Parental education levels for blacks and Hispanics in these districts are quite high compared even to the national averages for whites. Still, there are gaps inside the districts because the education levels among white and Asian residents are so *very* high.

-- Table 2 about here --

In addition, black and Hispanic students have more siblings. Half of blacks, but only 19 percent of whites, 32 percent of Asians, 40 percent of Hispanics and 41 percent of mixed-race students have 3 or more siblings. Assuming that most siblings live in the same household, more siblings means more sharing of scarce resources such as the family computer(s) and parental

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[14] Here, "about half or less" represents a composite of three options on the survey: "about half," "some" and "very little or none."

attention. White households have the fewest children and the most computers, while Hispanic households have more children and the fewest computers. Similarly, white youth report more books in their homes than other groups. Hispanic students report the fewest books, but black, Asian and mixed students also report substantially fewer than whites.

Does SES predict achievement disparities?

The analysis in this section is designed to answer two related questions. One is whether SES helps to predict racial and ethnic differences in achievement. Many studies have addressed this question, and the answer is virtually always yes.[16] The other is whether the magnitude of the achievement gap is different for different SES levels. For both questions, the answer here is yes. Disparities in socioeconomic status (SES) predict substantial portions of the disparity for each measure of achievement, but not all of it.[17] In addition, the residual "unexplained" disparity, holding SES constant, is greater among students from high SES households.

For this analysis, the grade point average (GPA) from the most recent term is measured on a 4-point scale and the other two achievement variables from Table 1 are measured now in standard deviation units.[18] Also, it is worth noting that the SES variables here relate conceptually to home intellectual resources (books in the home, computers in the home, parents' education) and number of parents per child (number of siblings and number of parents). The data for this study lack financial status measures such as wealth, income or free-and reduced lunch status.[19]

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[15] The data also include father's years of schooling, but there are fewer missing values for mothers. The parent's education variables used in multiple regression estimates combine mother's and father's education data, and replace missing values using standard methods.

[16] See, for example, various chapters in Jencks and Phillips, 1998, and references included therein.

[17] This finding comes from a multiple regression analysis with fixed effects to control for school and grade level. Explanatory variables were the family background measures listed in table two, except that the parental education variable in regressions included father's education as well. Missing values of explanatory variables were replaced with missing-value dummy variables.

[18] Using the standard deviation for the whole data set, across all schools, grades and racial groups.

[19] Since they would correlate strongly with the variables we do have, it is uncertain how much more (or less) achievement disparity we could predict if such variables were included. Similarly, there is no way to know how much the findings might change if student responses were free of any errors or biases.

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The analysis here uses four standardized SES categories.[20] Table 3a shows what percentage of each race/ethnic group is in each of them. Only two percent of blacks have SES characteristics in the highest SES category, while only three percent of whites have characteristics in the lowest category. Seventy-nine percent of blacks, seventy-eight percent of Hispanics, fifty-six percent of mixed students, forty-six percent of Asians and only twenty-eight percent of whites are in the lowest and lower-middle categories combined. A look back at Table 2 shows the types of SES disparities for particular variables that together account for the disparities in Table 3a.

Table 3b uses SES "profiles" constructed from the SES categories defined above. For a given SES category, say, "lower-middle SES," the SES profile comprises the list of mean SES characteristics across all race/ethnic groups combined. Thus, each profile is identical for all race/ethnic groups in a given SES category.

-- tables 3a and 3b about here --

The "prototypical student" defined by a given SES profile has a different predicted achievement level, depending on race/ethnicity. This is true for each of our three achievement variables (GPA, comprehension of lessons and understanding of readings). The lowest SES level shows the least race/ethnic achievement disparity.[21] For this profile, the predicted black-white gap in GPA is only 0.14 GPA points and the predicted GPA for Hispanics is actually 0.09 points higher than for whites (panel A of Table 3b). Similarly, in panels B and C of Table 3b, the other two achievement measures do not show any clear tendency for whites to rank higher than other

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[20] To form the SES categories, I began by using all of the SES measures in the data, but not race, to predict GPA. This multiple regression produced regression coefficients to use as weights in composite SES measures. The equation used a dummy variable for each value of each SES variable, in order to allow for non-linearity in estimated effects. The equation also included school-grade-level fixed effects and gender. Missing values for explanatory variables were handled using dummy variables. The adjusted R-square for the equation was 0.23. Using the results, some students' SES characteristics (ignoring race/ethnicity) put them in the bottom ten percent of predicted GPAs. I labeled this group the "lowest SES" group. Others' characteristics predict that they would be in the forty percent of the distribution from the 10th to the 50th percentile (labeled "lower-middle SES") or from the 50th to the 90th percentile (labeled "upper-middle SES"). Finally, some would be in the top ten percent and this group is labeled "highest SES."

[21] Multiple regressions for each achievement measure were estimated separately for each race/ethnic group, and the coefficients from these regressions were used to predict race/ethnic specific achievement levels for each SES profile.

groups. Generally, these findings show only small race/ethnic achievement gaps in MSAN districts among students with the lowest SES profile.

However, at the highest SES level, the disparity among groups is much greater. Whites rank highest and blacks lowest, with sizable gaps between them. The predicted GPA gap at the highest SES level is a fifth of a GPA point between whites and mixed-race students, one-third of a point between whites and Hispanics and a full half point between whites and blacks. The rank order of predicted achievement among groups is the same for the two skill measures, in panels B and C. Note that the predictions for whites and Asians are essentially equal across all three measures.

High SES students achieve at higher levels than middle and low SES students among all racial and ethnic groups. However, findings here indicate that the degree to which SES pays off differs among groups. For all three measures, the difference in achievement between high and low SES students is smallest for blacks and Hispanics. The reasons are not entirely clear and will be the subject of ongoing research by this author and others. The differences may simply be artifacts of the (in)accuracy with which students answered the survey. More likely, they may reflect race/ethnic differences in home, peer and classroom processes among high SES students. In any case, it appears from this analysis that SES differences (and the differential life experiences that they represent) account for some but not all racial and ethnic differences in student-reported GPA, understanding of teachers' lessons and comprehension of materials read for school. Further, the unexplained racial differences are greatest at the highest SES levels.

Time spent studying and doing homework

A common view is that an important reason for achievement gaps may be that black and Hispanic students do not work as hard at their studies as whites and Asian students.[22] Therefore, we ask, "Is there evidence in the data that black and Hispanic students in MSAN districts are not working as hard as whites and Asians?"

The best measure of student effort in the Ed-Excel data is the student's report of how much time he or she spends on weekdays after school studying and doing homework. The data show very small racial differences among classmates. Panel A of Table 4 shows that only Asians stand out as studying more than other groups. Among students not enrolled in honors or AP classes, Asians report that they study and do homework for about half an hour more per night than other groups. Among those enrolled in at least one honors or AP course, Asians report about two thirds of an hour more. The differences between Asians and others in this regard are very statistically significant. Conversely, a couple of the differences between whites compared to blacks and Hispanics are statistically significant, but they are miniscule—the largest is 0.09 hours per night (about five minutes, which is roughly one-twentieth of a standard deviation). Among blacks, whites, Hispanics and mixed students, racial differences in time on homework come primarily from differences in the degree to which the groups enroll in honors and AP courses, not from differences among students taking the same classes.

-- table 4 about here --

While course-level differences among blacks, whites, Hispanics and mixed students in time studying and doing homework are trivial, blacks, Hispanics and mixed students report lower rates of homework completion than whites for any given amount of time spent studying. Panel B of table 4 shows the differences in standard deviation units. By roughly 0.20 to 0.30 standard deviations, blacks, mixed race and Hispanics complete less homework per night than whites do. These are not huge differences, but they are probably large enough to be noticed by teachers and may cause some teachers to assume that blacks, Hispanics and mixed-race students put less time and effort into their studies compared to whites and Asians classmates. Evidence here suggests that such assumptions about time and effort would be correct regarding how blacks, Hispanics and mixed-race students compare to Asians, but incorrect regarding how they compare to whites.

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[22] See, for example, McWhorter, 2000.

Table 5 shows homework completion patterns, cross-tabulated with time on homework. It pools student reports of homework completion for math, science, English and social studies into a composite index of homework completion. Describing how much homework students complete, the three values of the index are "some, or not much of it," "most of it," and "all of it."[23] The time-on-homework data are collapsed into three categories, representing about one hour or less (labeled "~1 hour"), about two hours (labeled "~2 hours") and about three hours, or more (labeled "~3 hours").

The first three columns of Table 5 show the patterns for whites and Asians combined while the second three columns show the patterns for blacks, Hispanics and mixed students. For each amount of time indicated, blacks, Hispanics and mixed students are less likely than whites and Asians to complete all of their homework and more likely to complete "some, or not much of it." For example, among students not enrolled in honors or AP courses who report about two hours per night doing homework, blacks, Hispanics and mixed students are only about half as likely as whites and Asians (20 percent versus 38 percent) to report that they usually complete all of their homework. It appears that black, Hispanic and mixed-race students work longer to complete the same amount of homework that whites and Asians complete in a shorter time.

-- table 5 about here --

Multiple regression estimates indicate that differences in family background together with gaps in comprehension of readings and teachers' lessons predict almost all differences in homework completion among blacks, whites, Hispanics and mixed-race students. This, together with findings of equal time on homework among blacks, whites, Hispanics and mixed-race

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[23] For each subject, the Ed-Excel survey question asked, "When teachers assign homework/after school work, how much of it do you usually do?" Students could indicate "homework is never assigned," "none of it," "some of it," "most of it," "all of it," and "more than required." For each subject, I created an index with three values. If the students' answer was "homework is never assigned," "none of it," or "some of it," the index had a value of 3. If the answer was "most of it," the value was 4 and if the answer was "all of it" or "more than required," the value was 5. Combining these across the four subjects creates an index with values ranging from 12 to 20. For table 5, values of 15 or lower are labeled "some, or not much of it," values of 16 to 19 are labeled "most of it," and values of 20 are labeled all of it.

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students taking the same classes, supports the interpretation that levels of effort among these groups are quite similar, but knowledge, skills and family backgrounds are not.[24]

Why students work hard

An adequately ambitious, multi-dimensional strategy to close racial and ethnic gaps in academic knowledge and skill would have many components. It would focus relentlessly on ideas and activities geared to produce learning. It would have roles for teachers, parents, administrators, students and others, including policymakers. Among the things it might ask of black, Hispanic and mixed-race adolescents is that they should devote more time and effort to their studies than they currently do, even if they already work as much, on average, as white classmates. This increase in effort is unlikely to occur without approaches to instruction that push students toward higher goals and make achieving those goals both feasible and rewarding.

The prospect of needing to increase effort levels brings us to the question of whether particular strategies for eliciting more effort from students are likely to be more effective than others. Some insight in this regard comes from student responses to the following question in the Ed-Excel survey. "When you work really hard in school, which of the following reasons is most important to you? Answer as many as apply to you." For each of fourteen items, students could darken a bubble indicating that the item is important or they could leave the bubble blank.

Table 6 shows student responses by race/ethnicity, ranked in order from the item that received the most responses to the item that received the least. For most items, the rank order from top to bottom is the same for all race/ethnic groups and the percentage of the group indicating that any given item is important does not differ greatly across groups. For example,

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[24] Analysis of whether time on homework and homework completion rates correlate with the GPA that students report for the end of the previous term shows that both homework measures help in predicting it. However, recall that there are few race/ethnic differences in time on homework among classmates. Therefore, homework completion rates, but not time on homework, help in predicting race/ethnic GPA gaps among students who take the same courses. Controlling for nothing but school and grade-level fixed effects, homework completion rates predict about one-sixth of GPA gap between whites and blacks, about one fifth of the gap between whites and mixed students, and one fourth of the gap between whites and Hispanic students, for those not enrolled in honors or AP classes. The analogous fractions are lower among

the top item among all groups is "I need the grades to get into college." The percentage of students indicating that this is an important reason ranges from 71 percent of Hispanic students to 81 percent of Asians. Blacks, whites and mixed-race students are nearly identical in their responses, at 77 percent of blacks and mixed-race students, and 78 percent of whites. The percentage marking "to please or impress my parents" occupies a narrow range from 61 percent of whites to 64 percent of Asians. Whites rank lowest and Asians rank highest, regarding the extrinsic goals of preparing for good jobs and tough college courses. For the more intrinsically oriented purposes, specifically, "I want to learn the material" and "the subject is interesting," group differences are very small. For most items in Table 6, no group stands out. The similarities are remarkable.

-- table 6 about here --

However, there are two items that show quite interesting race/ethnic differences, especially when considered together.[25] Specifically, compared to whites, black and Hispanic students are more likely to indicate "my teachers encourage me to work hard" as a motivational factor and less likely to identify "the teacher demands it." Blacks are three times as likely to endorse encouragement, as they are to cite teacher demands; 47 percent identify teacher encouragement as an important motivator, compared to 15 percent for teacher demands. Hispanics are two times as likely to cite encouragement (41 percent) compared to demands (19 percent) and whites are roughly equally as likely (31 percent for encouragement and 29 percent for demands). Asians (31:20) and mixed-race students (37:24) fall between the patterns for whites, on one side, versus blacks and Hispanics, on the other.

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students enrolled honors or AP classes. About two-thirds to three-quarters of race/ethnic differences in homework completion are predicted by the MSAN Ed-Excel SES variables discussed above.

[25] Another item in the table that shows race/ethnic differences is, "I don't want to embarrass my family." Here, the response ranges from 15 percent for whites to 33 percent for Asians, with blacks and Hispanics more like Asians than whites.

Responses regarding demands and encouragement are mostly unrelated to measures of socioeconomic status.[26] As Table 7 shows, no matter how many parents students live with or how many years of schooling the mother has attained, race/ethnic differences in the relative importance of encouragement follow the same basic pattern. Not shown, is that responses are also unrelated to our other measures of socioeconomic background.

-- table 7 about here --

I have not studied precisely what teachers' statements, demeanors and behaviors students in MSAN districts interpret as demanding or encouraging, and whether these differ by race and ethnicity. I have, however, asked a few black and Hispanic students in MSAN schools to help me understand these findings concerning encouragement and demands. Concerning demands, they have very little to say. However, they have a great deal to say about encouragement. One student says, "I find it encouraging when teachers tell me I 'can do it' and when they don't make judgements about why I haven't done something that I was supposed to." Another says, "I find it encouraging when teachers give me full explanations to help me understand things, instead of short 'yes' or 'no' answers." A third student says, "I find it encouraging when teachers stay after school to give me extra help and don't seem like they're in a big hurry to go." Based on these and other anecdotal observations, encouragement seems to entail assurances from teachers that students have the ability to succeed and teacher behaviors that provide active support for success. Conversely, a demand is an order to submit to the power of the person making the demand, and carries no assurance that the person making the demand really cares about the student or will offer any special assistance. Especially for students of color, survey responses indicate that teacher demands are probably not very effective.

[26] For other evidence of racial differences in motivational processes see: Boykin and Bailey, 2000; Steele and Aronson, 1998; Jussim, Eccles and Madon, 1996.

Visible differences, hidden similarities

The Ed-Excel survey asked students to identify the characteristics of the most popular crowd in their first year of middle school or junior high. Black and mixed-race students cited "tough" more than whites, Hispanics or Asians. (See Table 8.) Conversely, larger percentages of whites, Asians and mixed-race students reported that members of the most popular crowd were "self-confident" and "outgoing." For example, there are not many differences in the percentages of blacks responding that the most popular crowd is "tough" (35 percent), "outgoing" (36 percent) and "self-confident" (39 percent). However, whites identify "outgoing" (54 percent) and "self-confident" (53 percent) more than twice as often as they identify "tough" (22 percent). While we lack survey responses from teachers, anecdotal reports from teachers suggest that group differences in demeanor continue through high school.

-- tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 about here --

Based on homework completion rates and the ways that students carry themselves, teachers may assume that black and Hispanic students not only work less hard than white classmates, but that they also place a lower priority on earning good grades and they enjoy school less. The MSAN Ed-Excel survey responses, however, do not support such inferences.

The Ed-Excel survey asked students whether their friends believe that working hard to get good grades is "very important," "somewhat important," "not too important," or "not at all important." Table 9 shows only modest race/ethnic variation in how students responded. For each race/ethnic group, roughly 90 percent answered that their friends regard studying hard to get good grades as either very important or somewhat important. The largest percentage answering "*very* important" was among blacks (56 percent), while the smallest percentage was among whites (42 percent). This is the opposite of what many teachers might expect based on what they observe. Similarly, Table 10 shows that groups are quite similar in responses concerning effort and motivation. Almost half of each group agrees, "If I didn't need good grades, I'd put little effort into my classes." Roughly two-thirds agree, "I don't like to do any more schoolwork than I

have to." Whites are the group that agrees most with the latter statement. Finally, nonwhite students want additional tutoring. While they already report more hours of tutoring per week than white peers, Table 11 shows that the gap between what they get and what they want is also larger.

Groups are also similar in the percentages reporting that they enjoy their studies. Table 12 shows patterns for three variables pertaining to enjoyment of books and math problems and four measures pertaining to the percentage of the time that teachers make lessons interesting. There is no clear pattern indicating that one group enjoys school more or judges teachers differently regarding how frequently they make lessons interesting. Hispanics, at 62 percent, are the group with the largest percentage saying that they enjoy the books and plays they read for English; percentages among the other groups range from 53 percent of blacks to 58 percent of Asians. Asians (at 62 percent) have the largest percentage that enjoys doing math problems, while the lowest percentage is among whites (45 percent). Whites are also least likely to agree that history and science books are interesting.

-- table 12 about here --

Table 12 shows a high level of agreement among the groups about the percentage of the time that teachers make lessons interesting. Note that with the minor exception of Hispanics in social studies, fewer than half of each group agrees that teachers in any subject make lessons interesting more than half the time. For all of the groups, math ranks lowest and the other three subjects are roughly even with one another.

For all groups, students with higher grade point averages are more prone to feel close to teachers, more likely to think that grading is fair and less likely to think that friends avoid asking for help when they need it. Table 13 shows that among students with similar grade point averages, students of different race/ethnic groups are quite similar in their views regarding whether grading is fair and whether they feel close to their teachers. Table 14 shows that students with higher GPAs are less inclined to believe that friends avoid asking for needed help.

-- tables 13 and 14 about here --

Finally, one small but nonetheless notable difference is among students with grades in the "A- to A" range. Among these students, whites are consistently the most likely to consider grading fair, to feel close to their teachers and to say that friends *do not* avoid asking for help. Like most of what this paper has discussed, this pattern for white students in the "A- to A" range holds not only in the aggregate, but also for most individual districts.[27] One plausible explanation that is impossible to prove or disprove with the present data, is that teachers are more friendly and supportive to high achieving white students than to white students with lower grades or students of other racial and ethnic groups.

Implications for policy and practice

Findings in this paper have implications for schools and communities as well as for state and federal policymakers. For schools and communities, I offer the following four recommendations.

First, it seems likely that incorrect assumptions about group differences in effort and interest may lead some schools to under invest in searching for ways to raise achievement levels among African-Americans, Hispanics and some mixed-race students. Teachers should assume that there are no systematic, group-level differences in effort or motivation to succeed, even when there are clearly observable differences in behavior and academic performance.

Second, racial and ethnic disparities in self-reported understanding of lessons and readings call attention to the fact that gaps in standardized test scores and school grades reflect real disparities in academic knowledge and skill. To help raise achievement and close gaps, schools should endeavor to identify specific skill and knowledge deficits that underlay comprehension problems for individuals in particular racial and ethnic groups and respond in targeted ways.

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[27] Indeed, the racial differences in some districts are large enough to deserve special attention, but to elaborate on this point is beyond the scope of this paper.

Third, given the importance that black and Hispanic students assign to teacher encouragement, teachers need to be aware of what students regard as encouraging. Using this awareness, they need to provide effective forms of encouragement *routinely*. Further, as the other recommendations imply, encouragement should be matched with truly effective instruction and other forms of academic support both inside and outside the classroom.

Fourth, and finally, in response to differences in family background advantages, schools could supply more educational resources and learning experiences outside the home, by providing access to books and computers and extracurricular opportunities for intellectual enrichment.

Even in the well-to-do suburban communities that this paper examines, teachers and youth-serving professionals may need targeted professional development in order to follow these recommendations. Professional development requires resources. To be persuaded to provide such resources, policymakers need to understand the rationale. At least initially, these recommendations may seem to conflict with current fashions in education policy. However, I suggest that there is, in fact, complementarity.

Policymakers for the past several years have placed a heavy emphasis on standards-based reforms. Promoted most prominently by *No Child Left Behind*, such reforms are the centerpiece of a national strategy for raising achievement and closing achievement gaps. At their core, standards-based reforms entail a heavy focus on content and alignment. Specifically, there is to be alignment between content standards (i.e., the prescribed knowledge that students are supposed to learn), the content of the curriculum, the content tested on state assessments and the content that teachers are trained through their schooling and professional development to understand and teach. With some notable exceptions, the possibility that relationships might affect whether students actually learn the content that teachers are trying to teach seldom enters the policy discourse.

Nonetheless, findings in this paper concerning the importance of encouragement to black and Hispanic students suggest that teacher-student relationships may be quite important resources for raising achievement and narrowing achievement gaps.

Content, pedagogy and relationships are three legs of what I call the instructional tripod. If one leg of a tripod is too weak, it falls over. A conjecture suggested by the findings above is that professional development activities that equip teachers to attend simultaneously to all three legs of the instructional tripod stand a better chance of helping states to meet their education policy objectives. We should expect that attending well to all three will affect teacher's capacity and commitment to engage students effectively in learning and, therefore, students' preparation to reach prescribed performance standards in the domains of particular content standards that state policies have articulated.

The Tripod Project as an example

The Tripod Project is an outgrowth of the research upon which this paper reports. Responding to the first three recommendations above, it is organized to harvest and share teachers' best ideas regarding ways of succeeding in the classroom, especially with nonwhite students and children from low SES households. It is also consistent with emerging best practice ideas about professional development and instructional leadership.[28] The goal is to enhance school-level capacity to attend to all three legs of the tripod—content, pedagogy and relationships—by effectively addressing five generic tasks of social and intellectual engagement in the classroom. In addition, a research component aims to refine our understanding of the ways

[28] For example, Supovitz and Poglinco (2001) conducted case studies of principals identified by their peers as outstanding instructional leaders. Among other things that they had in common, these instructional leaders cultivated a community of instructional practice, creating safe and collaborative environments for teachers to engage with one another and also with a wide range of outside actors to deepen the work. Similarly, Spillane (2002) describes a "situated" approach to teacher learning that engages teachers in constructing knowledge, playing roles as leaders, being active learners and participating in activities that stress the social aspects of learning. Topics are integrated around areas of potential reform, with both internal and external actors providing guidance, and activities utilizing a curriculum involving several types of devices, including teachers' own practice. The approach is social rather than individualistic and it promotes teachers' identities as learners in school and classroom contexts where relationships matter a great deal.

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that particular classroom conditions affect achievement among students of particular racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Literatures as diverse as business marketing, social work, innovation diffusion, child development and group-process, have developed theories and descriptions of the tasks entailed in achieving and sustaining cooperation among people who share particular contexts and must work together to achieve their goals. Scholars in each separate literature have discovered the same five tasks.[29] The period during which a particular task seems to be the most salient is the stage identified with that task. However, each task has implications for each stage. In addition, there may be backsliding: a task that was mostly resolved can become the most salient again if conditions unravel.

For the Tripod Project, I have adapted these ideas to characterize five tasks and stages of social and intellectual engagement in primary and secondary school classrooms. The basic idea is that students will be most likely to excel if they

(1) begin the semester feeling trustful of the teacher and interested (instead of mistrustful and uninterested);

(2) experience a good balance between teacher control and student autonomy (instead of too little or too much of either);

(3) are ambitiously goal-oriented in their learning (instead of feeling ambivalent); and

(4) work industriously in pursuing their goals for learning (instead of becoming discouraged in the face of difficulty or disengaged due to boredom).

(5) The fifth task is for teachers to help students consolidate their new knowledge and, thus equipped, to be *and feel* well prepared for future classes and life experiences.

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[29] For Erikson's tasks and stages of identity development, see Erikson, 1963. For Tuckman's model of group process, see Baron, Kerr and Miller, p. 14. On innovation diffusion, see Rogers, 1983. For a conceptually structured case example of social work with gangs, see Fox, 1985. For a discussion of developing customer relations in marketing, see chapter 19 of Kotler, 1986. For examples where I have applied the same model in other contexts, see Ferguson and Snipes, 1996 (available from the author) and Ferguson, 1999, pp. 589-604.

The Tripod Project is organized around a series of five school-wide faculty meetings, one for each stage, all of which have the same basic structure.[30] Each school-wide meeting leads to work in smaller groups of volunteers where teachers share ideas to expand and refine their repertoire of strategies for succeeding with each respective task and stage. The volunteers seek and find opportunities to report their ideas and experiences to teachers who are not *yet* as involved in the search for ways of improving.

The next few paragraphs describe briefly how the project addresses all three legs of the tripod and responds to at least three of the recommendations listed above (i.e., assume no motivational differences, address specific skill deficits and supply ample encouragement routinely).

Stage one is called trust and interest versus mistrust and indifference. It begins on the first day that students arrive in the classroom, if not before. Teachers try to signal to students that the year is going to go well, with respect to all five tasks, while students begin developing impressions regarding the teacher's caring, competence, consistency and respect for students. Sharing among teachers concerns ways of establishing good initial rapport with the class and getting off to a good start in which students feel respected, encouraged and optimistic.

Stage two, balanced versus imbalanced teacher control and student autonomy, begins soon afterward, as students focus on how seriously to take the teacher and the class and how much autonomy to relinquish in compliance with the teacher's rules and regulations. If the teacher seems firm but also caring, competent, consistent and respectful, the class should find it easier to achieve a good balance between teacher control and student autonomy. Teachers share ideas at this stage concerning ways of being firm enough to establish and maintain order in the classroom, but without using heavy-handed methods that might make students fearful and

[30] The one hour includes a ten-minute stage-specific video; ten minutes for teachers to respond in writing to a short list of prompts; fifteen minutes for a panel of five students to respond to some prompts and take questions from the audience; then twenty-five minutes for open discussion among the faculty, leading to smaller group activities afterward.

withdrawn or oppositional. These include ways of giving students incentives and choices that promote their dignity and foster a sense of responsibility for helping the class to work well as a community.

Stage three, ambitiousness versus ambivalence, comes on gradually as perceptions develop regarding how feasible, useful and enjoyable success is likely to be. All three legs of the tripod are important and all four of the recommendations listed above are useful to have in mind. Concerning the first two legs of the tripod (content and pedagogy), the feasibility of success depends upon the teacher's content knowledge and pedagogic skill to explain the material so that the student can understand it, *given the student's current skill level*.

Feasibility also depends upon the student's willingness to ask for help, which is key if the student needs personal assistance from the teacher in order to be successful. A student who views the teacher as uncaring, incompetent, inconsistent, disrespectful or too controlling is likely to be ambivalent about seeking help from the teacher, while a teacher who feels emotionally disconnected from a student or class may send discouraging signals regarding the willingness to provide help. Let me emphasize again that the teacher's knowledge of content and pedagogy are important. However, because of the way that relationships and encouragement affect motivation, help seeking and help giving, ambitiousness may be difficult to achieve if teacher-student relationship issues that should have been resolved in stages one and two remain largely unsettled.

Assuming that such issues are largely settled, sharing among teachers during stage three concerns ways of helping students to understand both teacher and student roles in making success feasible and enjoyable. Teachers share ideas with one another about ways of helping students to make plans, develop strategies, set goals and adopt generally ambitious orientations toward achievement in particular subjects and classrooms.

Stage four, industriousness versus disengagement, is the period for following through on the ambitiousness cultivated during stage three. The challenge during this stage is to sustain a high level of industriousness and, if this fails, to recover from whatever discouragement or

disengagement setbacks might cause. Ideally, the ambitiousness cultivated during stage three will persist through this period when the focus now is on industriously performing the work to make success real. However, if there are setbacks that cast doubt on whether success is truly feasible, if the lessons seem irrelevant or excessively boring, or if relationships among students or between students and the teacher deteriorate in the classroom, students may become discouraged and disengaged. The Tripod Project embodies the presumption that capacity to recover—to be resilient—depends on how deeply students and the teacher care for and trust one another and how well the balance of teacher control and student autonomy is being maintained. It also depends on the level of commitment to success that the teacher and students together achieved during stage three.

The sharing among teachers at stage four focuses on ways of making success feasible, enjoyable and relevant for all students. Some teachers review student work together and talk about patterns of misunderstanding and ways of responding to such patterns, including ways of explaining particular concepts that students find difficult. Some collaborate in reviewing detailed data from standardized exams that may hold clues for where instruction needs to focus. Some trade ideas about ways of structuring lessons and homework assignments and share ideas about ways of showing students that particular topics really do connect to real life. Some talk about ways of diagnosing classroom dynamics, so that peer pressures do not interfere with individual students' industriousness and commitment. In addition, some share ideas about ways of spotting students who are becoming discouraged due to failure or disengaged due to boredom and ways of helping such students to recover their industriousness.

Finally, stage five is called consolidation versus irresolution. Coming toward the end of the school year, it is the period for helping students to truly own what they have learned. Ideally, teachers will help students to understand the scaffolding by which what they have learned in the class builds upon what they knew before and also the ways that various facts, ideas and concepts in their lessons relate to one another. They will talk more than before about the ways that their

lessons can help them in real life and the reasons that trying to digest and remember what they have learned is important. Sharing among teachers at this stage concerns ways of motivating and helping students to see connections. Like stages three and four, much of this sharing is among teachers who have very similar teaching assignments and face similar challenges and opportunities in the classroom.

In the process of sharing ideas and searching for new insights, teachers will find themselves strengthening each leg of the tripod in their own classrooms. This is the pilot year for the project. Progress is underway and mechanisms are being designed for sharing ideas among schools and across districts.[31]

Conclusion

There is much that does not meet the teacher's eye, but that nonetheless affects how ambitiously and effectively students learn. African American and Hispanic students in MSAN districts have fewer family background advantages on average, compared to whites and Asians. In addition, they have lower grade point averages and report less understanding of their lessons. They have lower homework completion rates than white classmates, but report spending virtually the same amount of time doing homework. Skill gaps and differences in home academic supports, not effort or motivation, appear to be the primary explanations for why they complete less homework and get lower grades than whites. Conversely, part of the reason that Asians complete more homework and get higher grades than other nonwhite groups, is that they devote more time to their studies.

Perhaps the most interesting finding here is the distinctive importance of teacher encouragement as a reported source of motivation for nonwhite students, especially African Americans, and the fact that this is truly a racial difference, mostly unrelated to measures of socioeconomic status. The special importance of encouragement highlights the likely importance

[31] Selected schools from a majority of MSAN districts as well as schools from an equal number of other districts are participating in the professional development, the research component, or both.

of strong teacher-student relationships in affecting achievement, especially for African American and Hispanic students. It also highlights the importance of trying to understand racial and ethnic differences in how students experience the social environments of schools and classrooms.[32]

Across the nation, standards-based reforms have been catalysts for a growing number of professional development initiatives to prepare educators to teach new content standards. However, if the aim of these efforts is to raise achievement and narrow gaps, focusing on content and pedagogy alone may be insufficient. A key implication of the findings in this paper is that even in well-to-do suburbs, professional development regimes might wisely attend to all three legs of the instructional tripod—content, pedagogy and relationships—not just one or two. In this way, they may prepare teachers better to inspire the trust, elicit the cooperation, stimulate the ambition and support the sustained industriousness that making *No Child Left Behind* a success will require.

[32] Among MSAN districts, interesting research in this regard is being done at Oak Park/River Forest High School in Illinois, where a team of teachers and researchers is carefully studying the school experiences and academic records of that high school's students.

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Table 1

Racial distributions for three achievement gap indicators. Numbers are percentages in each response category, for each racial or ethnic group.

Panel A: ***What was your grade point average last term?***

	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
D+ or below	9	2	8	3	8
C- to C+	35	12	26	12	22
B- to B+	40	36	45	35	38
A- to A	15	50	21	50	32
Column Total	100	100	100	100	100

Panel B: ***How much of the material that you read for school do you understand very well?***

	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
About Half or Less	55	29	56	42	41
A Lot	30	35	30	31	30
Almost All	15	35	14	27	29
Column Total	100	100	100	100	100

Panel C: ***What percentage of the time do you completely understand the teacher's lesson?***

	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
About Half the Time or Less	48	28	46	31	38
65% to 89%	36	44	36	38	38
90% or more	16	29	18	30	24
Column Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2

Five Types of Socioeconomic Disparity within and among Racial and Ethnic Groups in the MSAN Ed-Excel Data

	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
	Percentages within Racial Groups				
Living Arrangements					
one parent or neither	53	15	35	19	37
1 parent & stepparent	11	9	10	5	13
two parents	36	77	55	76	50
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Mother's Years of Schooling					
12 or fewer	28	11	50	25	22
13 to 15	23	12	15	10	17
4-year college graduate	27	41	16	33	33
advanced degree	21	36	19	31	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number of Siblings					
2 or fewer siblings	49	81	60	68	59
3 or more siblings	51	19	40	32	41
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Access to a Computer at Home					
no access to a computer at home	22	3	30	10	13
one computer at home	51	40	50	48	44
two or more computers at home	27	57	20	42	43
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Books in the Student's Home					
10 or fewer books at home	10	2	20	8	6
between 10 & 100 books at home	50	18	51	45	29
over 100 books at home	40	79	29	47	65
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3a

Percentage distribution of each race/ethnic group across four SES categories

SES Category	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed	Total
			Percentages			
Lowest SES	24	3	19	7	12	10
Lower Middle	55	25	59	39	44	40
Upper Middle	19	57	19	41	37	40
Highest SES	2	16	3	12	8	10
Column Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3b

Simulations by SES profile and race/ethnicity
for three achievement measures*

SES Profile	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
		Panel A			
	Simulated mean GPA (4-point scale)				
Lowest SES	2.38	2.52	2.61	2.66	2.30
Lower Middle	2.65	2.91	2.88	3.07	2.73
Upper Middle	2.88	3.36	3.13	3.36	3.17
Highest SES	3.18	3.68	3.34	3.67	3.49
		Panel B			
	Simulated amount that the student "completely" understands of teachers' lessons (standard deviation units).				
Lowest SES	-0.38	-0.54	-0.44	-0.58	-0.59
Lower Middle	-0.23	-0.22	-0.21	-0.26	-0.26
Upper Middle	0.00	0.20	0.01	0.06	0.22
Highest SES	0.04	0.35	0.11	0.35	0.31
		Panel C			
	Simulated amount that the student understands "very well" of material read for school (standard deviation units).				
Lowest SES	-0.56	-0.59	-0.65	-0.64	-0.57
Lower Middle	-0.36	-0.15	-0.39	-0.29	-0.31
Upper Middle	-0.07	0.25	-0.06	0.17	0.17
Highest SES	0.06	0.44	0.17	0.41	0.36

* Simulations are for fixed SES profiles, where achievement predictions use regression coefficients estimated separately by race/ethnicity. See text and footnotes for more detail.

Tables 4 and 5 on this page.

Table 4

Racial and Ethnic Differences in time studying or doing homework (panel A) and homework completion (panel B).

Honors/AP Enrollment Status	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
	Each group's mean minus whites' mean				
Panel A: Gap in time studying or doing homework (in hours)					
Not currently in honors or AP courses	-0.02	n.a.	-0.08**	0.50**	0.05
In at least one honors or AP course	0.09**	n.a.	0.04	0.66**	0.03
Panel B: Gap in the amount of homework completed (in standard deviations)					
Not currently in honors or AP courses	-0.26**	n.a.	-0.29**	0.06**	-0.28**
In at least one honors or AP course	-0.20**	n.a.	-0.21**	0.22**	-0.16**

Note: Differences are multiple regression coefficients on race/ethnic indicator variables, using multiple regressions with school-grade-level fixed effects. "*" indicates statistical significance at the 0.10 level using a two-tailed t-test of significance; "**" indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

Table 5

Percentages completing "some," "most" or "all" homework in given amounts of time on task, tabulated by race/ethnicity for (A) students not currently enrolled in honors/AP courses and (B) students who are.

A. Column percentages for students who take no honors or advanced placement courses

	Whites and Asians			Blacks, Hispanics & Mixed		
	Nightly hours studying or doing homework:					
	~1 hour	~2 hours	~3+ hours	~1 hour	~2 hours	~3+ hours
Amount of HW completed	*Column percents*			*Column percents*		
Some, or not much of it	26	10	7	34	17	12
Most of it	52	52	47	53	63	60
All of it	22	38	46	12	20	28
Column total	100	100	100	100	100	100

B. Column percentages for students in at least one honors or advanced placement course

Some, or not much of it	18	7	3	29	11	8
Most of it	54	54	46	58	62	57
All of it	28	40	51	13	27	34
Column total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6

Percent of respondents, by race/ethnicity, that selected each respective response to the question: "When you work really hard in school, which of the following reasons are most important to you? (Mark as many as apply to you.)"

	Black	White	Latino	Asian	Mixed
			Percentages		
1. I need the grades to get into college.	77	78	71	81	77
2. To please or impress my parents.	62	61	62	64	63
3. Help me get a better job.	60	54	63	64	59
4. Prepare for tough college courses.	62	53	59	64	58
5. I want to learn the material.	57	52	57	56	53
6. My parents put pressure on me.	44	47	39	50	49
7. The subject is interesting.	37	41	40	40	40
8. My teachers encourage me to work hard.	47	31	41	31	37
9. The teacher demands it.	15	29	19	20	24
10. I enjoyed doing the assignment.	32	29	33	33	32
11. To please or impress my teacher.	29	28	29	29	29
12. I want to keep up with my friends.	24	27	23	31	28
13. I don't want to embarrass my family.	26	15	27	33	24
14. My friends put pressure on me.	8	7	8	9	10

Table 7

Evidence that encourage/demand responses for MSAN students are mainly racial/ethnic patterns, not associated with socio-economic status

Question: When you work really hard in school, which of the following reasons are most important to you? (Check as many as apply to you)

	Black	White	Latino	Asian	Mixed	Total
	Percentage in each cell who checked the response: "My teachers encourage me to work hard."					
Living arrangements						
One parent or neither	47	31	41	31	41	40
One parent & stepparent	53	33	42	37	45	40
Two parents	45	32	41	31	34	34
Column total	47	32	41	31	38	36
Mother's years of schooling						
12 or fewer	50	33	39	32	42	40
13 to 15	45	32	38	30	41	38
4-year college graduate	43	30	33	29	36	33
advanced degree	44	31	42	27	33	33
Column total	46	31	39	30	37	35
	Percentage in each cell who checked the response: "The teacher demands it."					
Living arrangements						
One parent or neither	16	27	18	22	22	20
One parent & stepparent	17	29	23	18	26	24
Two parents	15	30	19	19	26	26
Column total	16	29	19	20	24	24
Mother's years of schooling						
12 or fewer	13	23	19	17	20	19
13 to 15	15	28	18	16	23	22
4-year college graduate	17	29	18	19	25	26
advanced degree	17	33	25	25	29	30
Column total	16	30	20	20	25	25

Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 on this page.

Table 8

Percentages identifying the listed characteristics as descriptive of the most popular crowd during the first year of middle or junior high school.

Characteristics	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Percentages		
Tough	35	22	24	20	33
Outgoing	36	54	36	47	47
Self-Confident	39	53	33	41	49

Table 9

How strongly friends agree with the statement,
"It's important to study hard to get good grades."

How important friends believe it is:	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Column Percent		
very important	56	42	49	54	45
somewhat important	38	49	40	39	45
not too important	5	7	8	6	7
not at all important	1	1	2	1	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 10
Levels of agreement with two statements about effort.

Statements about Effort	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Percentages that Agree		
If I didn't need good grades, I'd put little effort into my classes.	42	42	45	43	44
I don't like to do any more schoolwork than I have to.	64	74	62	58	71

Table 11

Actual and Desired Weekly Hours of Tutoring

Hours of Tutoring	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Hours per week		
Mean reported actual hours per week	.83	.47	.78	.63	.67
Mean reported desired hours per week	1.45	.78	1.35	1.20	1.12
Desired minus actual	.63	.32	.53	.57	.46

Tables 12 and 13 on this page.

Table 12

Panel A: Percentages reporting that they enjoy reading school books and doing math problems.

	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Percent		
I like the books & plays we read for English.	53	57	62	58	54
I enjoy doing math problems.	54	45	57	62	47
The history & science books are interesting.	40	35	51	48	37

Panel B: Percentages reporting that the teacher makes the subject interesting more than half the time.

Subject	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Percent		
Math	32	31	39	39	30
English	41	45	47	44	43
Social Studies	44	49	51	45	46
Science	42	45	49	49	43

Table 13

Percentages that agree with two statements about fairness in grading and closeness to teachers, tabulated by race/ethnicity and grade point average

Student's Grade Point Average at the End of the Last Term	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed
			Panel A.		
			Percent in each cell that agrees:		
			"My teachers DON'T grade me fairly."		
D+ or below	35	38	35	38	41
C- to C+	30	28	26	26	34
B- to B+	23	22	20	22	26
A- to A	20	12	15	24	21
Group total	26	18	22	19	27
			Panel B.		
			Percent in each cell that agrees:		
			"I DON'T feel close to any of my teachers."		
D+ or below	48	50	52	57	50
C- to C+	42	45	45	49	47
B- to B+	38	39	38	37	40
A- to A	39	33	39	34	37
Group total	40	37	41	38	41

Table 14

Percentage of students who agree that friends don't ask for help even if they need it, tabulated by race/ethnicity and last term's GPA.

Student's Grade Point Average at the end of last term.	**Black**	**White**	**Hispanic**	**Asian**	**Mixed**
			Percent		
D+ or below	31	36	39	35	38
C- to C+	29	28	31	23	31
B- to B+	25	22	27	21	21
A- to A	22	15	26	16	20
Group Total	27	19	29	19	24

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